

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claim 1, as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A spin-drying method of wet-cleaned wafers which are not stored in a cassette, individually, in a sealed cleaning housing, said method consisting of the application of a spin drying treatment to the face of each wafer by supporting and rotating each wafer at high speed in the sealed cleaning housing while an inert gas for preventing oxidation is supplied to the face of the wafer in a drying step,

where the inert gas is supplied to the inside of a gas injection section and flows along the upper face of a baffle plate, turns around the outer peripheral edge of the baffle plate, and passes through injection openings of a bottom plate, said injection openings being located between the baffle plate and the wafer,

where the amount of inert gas to be supplied to the face of each wafer is such that the amount of inert gas supplied at the outer peripheral portion is larger than that at the center thereof.

Claim 2 (Previously presented): The spin-drying method according to Claim 1, wherein a sealed drying space is formed at the outer peripheral portion of the face of the wafer and the inert gas is supplied to the inside of the sealed drying space so that the space is filled with inert gas.

Claim 3 (Previously presented): The spin-drying method according to Claim 1, wherein the inert gas employed is a nitrogen gas.

Claims 4-14 (Canceled)